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AUTHOR Barlow, Bruce M.; Timiraos, Carmen R.
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ABSTRACT

In summation of the three surveys which comprised the total Adult Needs Assessment, four basic generalities describe the adult learning situation in Colorado. (1) The people recognize and appreciate adult learning as a necessary and desirable means toward improving their lives. Their view toward education is serious and mature. (2) The public agencies are making an aggressive effort to serve their consituencies but are frustrated by an inability to meet their own existing objectives. There is an urgent need for steady funding to enable the attainment of those objectives and to permit operational efficiencies through reduction of inter-agency referral traffic. (3) The employer community recognized a need for adult programs in their localities and while it is reluctant to provide monetary support to fulfill those needs, it would consider providing ancillary support to the right kind of programs. Employers in general recognize and acknowledge the benefit to themselves accruing from employee participation in adult programs. (4) Opinions of past learning programs are positive both in terms of attitudes toward those experiences and in an expressed desire for future participation. Adult Education Programs have enabled people to achieve diplomas and continue to improve themselves by participating in other more advanced programs. Clearly these activities must be continued. (RC)

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SUMMARY REPORT

COLORADO ADULT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

ode
SBCCOE

"THEY CAN BECAUSE THEY THINK THEY CAN"

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COLORADO ADULT NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Prepared by:

Bruce M. Barlow, Project Manager

and

Carmen R. Timiraos, Consultant

Sponsored by:

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF COLORADO

and

STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

Section of Adult Education

John S. Brennan, Supervisor

Denver, Colorado

August 1975

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FOREWORD

TO THE READERS OF THIS DOCUMENT:

We are pleased to present this report of the findings of the Colorado Adult Needs Assessment conducted during the 1974-75 fiscal year.

The Colorado Department of Education and the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education co-sponsored the needs assessment since both agencies are concerned with the development and delivery of improved Adult Education services in Colorado.

The assessment was an arduous undertaking for which no previous similar effort was available to serve as a guide.

It is our hope that information has been compiled which will help those individuals and agencies, engaged in Adult Education services, in the development and delivery of those services. These statewide findings should be viewed and interpreted by the users in terms of the specific objectives for their programs.

It is our belief that this report represents a unique effort in Adult Education and hopefully is the beginning of a continuing effort to address the needs of our state.

Calvin M. Frazier

Calvin M. Frazier
Commissioner of Education

William D. Woolf
Director of Occupational Education

PREFACE

This study represents the first state wide adult needs assessment conducted in the State of Colorado.

The population groups included in the study were: randomly selected adults, 16 years of age and older not enrolled in any type of formal education programs at the time of the study; randomly selected employers, with as few as four people and as many as five hundred or more in their employment and identified agencies which provide service to adults.

The data presented in this report were collected primarily to assist in all phases of planning, management and evaluation of adult programs as well as trying to assess the extent to which agencies serve the adult population and to identify employment requirements and needs.

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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

This study has received support and assistance from a large number of individuals and service agencies. We are grateful for the interest and cooperation we have received. We are particularly indebted to those who responded to the study's questionnaires and to our field staff for their dedication and persistance in getting the work accomplished.

Special thanks to Dolores Krashes for her help in the preparation of this report.

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Fiscal year 1974 program information and recommendations summarized in this booklet were commissioned under Adult Basic Education state grant funds and Vocational Education (P.L. 90-576) state grant funds provided to Colorado by the United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. However, the evaluative opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position of policy of the United States Office of Education and no official endorsement by the United States Office of Education should be inferred.

INTRODUCTION

The need for a comprehensive and statewide assessment of the educational and occupational needs, interests and attitudes of adults in the State of Colorado started coming into focus during 1972. Because of a lack of specific information, financial commitments to Adult Basic Education were tenuous. Efforts toward funding Adult Basic Education through the Colorado State Legislature were unsuccessful because there did not exist adequate information on adults' needs to warrant state funding consideration.

While census information provided population data categorized by age group, ethnic group, level of income and similar demographics, it did not indicate either adult educational needs or desires. An Adult Needs Assessment was clearly indicated.

In 1974, a cooperative effort was launched by the Colorado State Department of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education to conduct an adult needs assessment throughout the State of Colorado.

Purpose of the project was to gather data about: 1) adult occupational, educational, and related needs; 2) agency services available to adults and, 3) the businessman's requirements and perceptions about adult needs.

After extensive pre-planning, an intensive literature search was conducted, dating back at least five years. This research indicated that, while needs assessments are a recent trend in education, the studies have encompassed

school systems and their populations exclusively. Their primary goals have been to gather data that allowed measurement of academic achievement as well as data for decision making in planning, programming, budget allocation and accreditation. Other studies reviewed focused only on participants in adult programs and dealt mostly with program effectiveness rather than adult needs.

The major thrust of the Colorado Adult Needs Assessment was to gather data to help identify educational needs and attitudes of adults, age sixteen and older, not enrolled in a formal education program.

Specific objectives of the Colorado Adult Needs Assessment were:

1) To identify the adult population by age, sex, race, marital status, employment status and other basic demographic data.

2) To identify existing educational needs of the adult population.

3) To identify the variables, i.e., health, employment, transportation, etc., that affect the attainments of the adult popul tion.

4) To identify the type of services presently being provided to the adult population.

5) To assess adult awareness and attitudes toward existing programs.

6) To assess adult preference for adult programs.

7) To identify employer interest and need for adult programs in the community.

8) To create a data base for use by adult service agencies in specifically analyzing the needs of their constituencies.

The Colorado Adult Needs Assessment is based upon the result of three separate survey thrusts: 1) the citizen survey; 2) the employer survey and, 3) the agency survey.

An overview of the results of these efforts is shown in the Colorado Adult Needs Assessment Summary Report. General data for the State of Colorado and for the thirteen Planning and Management Districts is presented in the report titled "Colorado Adult Needs Assessment." Cross tabulations for exact analysis of each Planning and Managment District are available from the computerized data bank on request.

The commentaries appearing in the full report are largely generalizations against which there may be individual exceptions. Their primary purpose is to identify trends and suggest areas for further investigation.

The success of the sponsors, the Colorado State Department of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education in meeting their objectives depends upon the utilization of these data by persons and agencies able to make a meaningful translation into effective programs for the adult population of the State of Colorado.

METHODOLOGY

Three different surveys were conducted:

1) The Citizens' Survey
2) The Employers' Survey
3) The Agencies' Survey

The data collection took place from August to October, 1974, for the Citizens' survey and from October to December, 1974, for the Employer and the Agencies mail-out surveys.

The data was gathered across the thirteen Planning and Management District Areas.

The Citizens' survey resulted in 5,337 usable personal interviews. Equal number of households were assigned to each Planning and Management District with a balanced representation from both rural and urban areas.

The Employers' survey included employers with as few as four employees as well as those employing five hundred people or more. The return rate for this survey was 33% out of 1,500 employers in the sample.

The Agency questionnaire was sent to agencies that provide all types of services to adults i.e., health, legal and employment services; two and four year colleges; etc.; with a response rate of 39.6% out of 978 agencies identified.

OVERVIEW

In summation of the three surveys which comprise the total Adult Needs Assessment, there are four basic generalities which describe the adult learning situation in Colorado today.

1) The people of Colorado recognize and appreciate adult learning as a necessary and desirable means toward improving their lives. Their view toward education is serious and mature.

2) The public agencies in Colorado are making an aggressive effort to serve their constituencies but are frustrated by an inability to meet their own existing objectives. There is an urgent need for steady funding to enable the attainment of those objectives and to permit operational efficiencies through reduction of inter-agency referral traffic.

3) The employer community in Colorado recognized a need for adult programs in their localities and while it is reluctant to provide monetary support to fulfill those needs, it would consider providing ancillary support to the right kind of programs. Employers in general recognize and acknowledge the benefit to themselves accruing from employee participation in adult programs.

4) Opinions of past learning programs are positive both in terms of attitudes toward those experiences and in an expressed

desire for future participation. Adult Education programs have enabled people to achieve diplomas and continue to improve themselves by participating in other more advanced programs. Clearly these activities must be continued.

SECTION 1

THE CITIZENS SURVEY

This probe into the attitudes and needs of the people of Colorado toward Adult Education Programs shows a strong latent desire for further learning experiences and a serious attitude toward adult education.

THE PEOPLE OF COLORADO

Colorado's adult population as represented in the study is basically mature and conventional. The people show a strong identification with Colorado programs and learning activities. A considerable number (43%) have had experience with learning programs other than compulsory education or college degree programs and report most favorably on those experiences —

* Approximately 80% of the respondents are over 25 years of age
* Approximately 32% of the employed in the sample are professionals and 47% skilled workers
* 33% of the employed have held their present jobs over 5 years and 24% have held their present jobs over 10 years
* 86% of the people interviewed are Anglo and 12% Spanish Americans
* 75% of the people responding are married, 12% are single and the remainder widowed or divorced
* There are approximately 35% who earn over $ 10,000 and 60% who earn $ 10,000 or less and 5% refusing to state their incomes
* Over 70% interviewees are high school graduates or better

PRESSURES TO LEARN

There are strong pressures favorable toward Adult Education Programs. While there is no evidence of widespread job dissatisfaction, there is a considerable aspiration to do something different --

* Self-concept is strongly positive and a majority of the people would go into a learning program or any new activity with considerable confidence

* A certificate or diploma at the completion of a program has universal appeal with the adults in the study

* There is a significant preference among adults in the study for programs that are held in the early evening and for a period of time not exceeding three months

* Learning programs are viewed as individual and personal opportunities with no significant importance derived from the participation of friends or relatives

* Appreciation for the broader implications of adult learning activities is evidenced by the expressed desire for "becoming a better informed person" which scored highly as a motivator among the employed and unemployed alike

COMMUNICATIONS - POTENCY AND PROBLEMS

Formal communications of program offerings should be critically examined. Word of mouth communication appears to have created the greatest awareness among those who have enrolled in past programs.

Across the general population, there were little more than half who could affirmatively state that they knew where they could receive training or take some kind of learning program. Their perception of the potency of the learning program (how good is it?) was mixed with about 1/3 reporting "very good", about 1/3 reporting "good" and the remainder less favorable.

Television, radio and newspapers share equally low in everyday communications exposure, however the print media appear to create a somewhat higher level of awareness.

REGIONAL RAMIFICATIONS

Colorado's thirteen Planning and Management Districts were created out of contiguous counties sharing similar economic and growth characteristics. Region 3, Denver Metropolitan Region, contains well over half the state's population and exhibits a uniqueness of characteristics containing --

* The highest percentage of employed adults
* The highest percentage of professionals
* The greatest percentage of persons with previous learning program experience
* Strongest participation in professional organizations
* Heaviest use of public transportation
* Higher levels of annual income

Region 4, Pikes Peak Region, is strongly dominated by Colorado Springs. It contains --

* Greatest percentage of newcomers (less than 1 year residents)
* Large numbers of single persons

Social sharing (family and friend participation) is strong as a motivator in the San Luis District and transportation is a greater negative factor.

The highest levels of expectation in terms of benefits resulting from learning programs were expressed in the Huerfano, Pueblo and Las Animas counties.

Greatest incidence of college graduates appears in the Northern Mountain Region; greatest incidence of persons completing only 1-6 grade level

is in the Lower Arkansas District which shares with San Luis the highest percentage of 7-12 grade accomplishers.

Self-confidence seems to be lowest in the Eastern Prairie Regions with a considerable degree of indecision toward career futures.

A CONCLUSION

The people of Colorado are receptive to adult learning opportunities and have identifiable interests which can be met.

Formal communication about services need to be reevaluated and strengthened for greater effectiveness.

Regional differences and characteristics offer unique opportunities for the structure of learning programs and the deterrents to learning are identifiable and can be overcome.

The data contained in the Adult Needs Assessment offers many answers if examined in the context of specific questions.

SECTION 2 THE EMPLOYER SURVEY

This survey of over 500 Colorado employers indicates a wide array of need for adult education classes which are not now being provided in the respondent communities --

* Commercial and Distribution Education	42% *
* Vocational and Technical Education	41%
* Personal Improvement Classes	29%
* General Academic Education	24%
* Safety and Driver Education	15%
* Civic and Public Affairs Education	14%
* Health and Physical Education	12%
* Vocational Agriculture Courses	8%
* Homemaking and Family Life Education	8%
* Special Education (for the handicapped)	7%
* Fine Arts and Crafts	7%
* Recreation Classes	6%
* Americanization and Basic Education	5%

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

It appears that there is employment at every level of educational attainment. Some employers report having job opportunities for persons with prison or felony records, however this is true mainly in urban areas and there are also jobs suitable for persons with physical handicaps. Equally important is the consensus that employees' opportunities for advancement would improve significantly with further training such as --

**Adds to more than 100% since more than one choice could be given.*

*	Special Skills Training	52% *
*	Vocational Training	42%
*	General Education Training	26%
*	GED/high school equivalency	17%

DETERRENTS TO GROWTH

In response to the question "if you are of the opinion that some of your employees are in need of further education, what do you think are the main obstacles which prevent them from getting it?", the consensus was --

*	Home responsibilities	45% *
*	Indifference	41%
*	Cost	40%
*	Not enough time	37%
*	Lack of information about existing programs	31%
*	Programs do not exist	29%
*	Job responsibilities	24%
*	Distance	22%
*	Time to complete program	22%
*	Programs not offered at appropriate times	15%
*	Age	11%
*	Programs not effective	8%
*	Transportation	6%
*	Health	1%

JOB TRAINING – TODAY

Pre-employment training appears to be relatively rare. 83% of the employers do not provide pre-employment training of any sort. Those

**Adds to more than 100% since more than one choice could be given.*

few who do, usually conduct such training on their own premises, however, some employer training activities are conducted at vocational schools and community colleges.

On-the-job training is provided by 90% of the employer organizations and primarily conducted on the premises. Union sponsored training is mostly of the apprenticeship type.

JOB TRAINING – TOMORROW

There is a substantial reluctance on the part of employers to offer or pay for employee learning programs even though the employers do report (1) jobs existing for practically every level of educational attainment, (2) employee opportunities for advancement through further education and (3) forecasts of productivity increases resulting from employee participation in adult learning classes.

In response to the question "If new occupational or educational services were made available outside your organization, would you consider providing monetary support? ... in-kind support?" over 58% said "No" to monetary support. There was, however, a stronger affirmative to providing in-kind support (62%).

When asked "Who should offer such programs?", community colleges and voc/ed schools were the majority of employers' choice. When asked "Who should pay for them?", their selection was:

* Individual Employees	62% *
* Business/Industry	42%
* Government	32%
* School Districts	23%
* Manpower Programs	17%

**Adds to more than 100% since more than one choice could be given.*

A CONCLUSION

Employees participation in learning programs is viewed as advantageous to themselves and contributing to their productivity on the job by employers.

Programs are viewed as the responsibility, both functionally and financially, of the schools, government, and individuals of Colorado. Participation by business/industry appears possible but will be minimal without some strong kind of impetus.

SECTION 3 THE AGENCY SURVEY

This survey of nearly 400 public agencies in Colorado portrays an effort to serve the need of the people and a frustration in doing so.

ALL PEOPLE ARE WELCOME

They indicate an aggressive effort to reach out and serve the total population, wherever it may be found, with relatively little specialization based on age, sex or income —

* Serve all age groups	88%*
* Serve all income groups	93%
* Serve both sexes	97%
* Serve all education levels	60%

ALL NEEDS ARE NOT MET

Their offerings are largely based upon actual assessments of individuals' needs, however, all such needs are not now being served. It seems fair to assume that an agency seeks to serve the larger needs of its constituency and attempts to alleviate secondary demands through inter-agency referrals.

In response to the question "Does your agency have resources and capabilities to meet the total requirements of your target clients, according to your agency objectives?", 60% responded "No".

**Adds to more than 100% since more than one choice could be given*

TO TRY IS TO DO

Clients are referred to other agencies for —

* Special Services	69% *
* Counselling	55%
* Treatment	53%
* Training	45%
* Testing	40%
* Placement	40%
* Funding	33%

There is a substantial utilization of other facilities. 67% reported using other locations for some of their services —

* Homes	50% *
* Public Schools	47%
* Public Buildings	35%
* Neighborhood Centers	29%
* Extension Sites	28%
* On the Street	24%
* Job Sites	23%
* College or Univ. Facilities	23%
* Community Action Centers	18%
* Contracted Training Centers	11%

**Adds to more than 100% since more than one choice could be given.*

Their service areas are usually quite large —

* More than one county	57% *
* Neighborhood	47%
* One county or less	39%

MONEY MATTERS

Agency funding appears to primarily come from government, closely followed by public support (fund drives, fees, private individuals) with organizational support (foundations, union, business/industry) being comparatively minimal. It is noteworthy that almost 1/3 of the responding agencies do not have sources of financial aid available to their clients. Those that do, however, seem to access a broad range of sources —

* Medicare/Medicaid	24% *
* Welfare	20%
* Governmental Sources	18%
* Part time work	17%
* Other Sources	15%
* Veterans Aid	14%
* Grants	13%
* Private Health Insurance	13%
* Scholarships	12%
* Loans	9%
* Special Ethnic Grants	5%
* Work Grants	5%
* Fellowhships	2%

**Adds to more than 100% since more than one choice could be given.*

Utilization of those sources closely follows the availability. There is one significant additional source utilized — the clients' own funds — reported as utilized by 46% of the responding agencies.

Agency funding sources have an impact upon agency offerings. "How does your agency decide upon specific services to be offered?" —

*	Fund Allocation	45% *
*	Government requirements	34%
*	Legally required	27%

Other impacts upon the decision come from —

*	Indiv. Needs Assessments	73% *
*	Community Surveys	35%

PASS THE WORD

There is a marked weakness in recruitment or enrollment thrust as well as a lack of public information about existing services.

Primary clientele recruitment is through referrals by other agencies, other clients, or the public at large. It is apparent that personal visits have a substantial impact upon the recruitment process. In response to "How are your clientele recrutied or enrolled?", the agencies responded —

*	Referral	79% *
*	Through other Clients	70%
*	Other Agencies	63%
*	Personal Visits	56%

**Adds to more than 100% since more than one choice could be given.*

* Newspaper, Radio, TV	46%
* Direct Mail	23%
* By Law	18%
* Catalogs	10%

In response to "What do you think are the main obstacles which prevent clients from receiving your services?" the following were primary —

* Lack of Information about Existing Services	49% *
* Cost	37%
* Indifference	33%
* Lack of Transportation	31%
* Appropriate services do not now exist	21%

A CONCLUSION

While the public education agencies in Colorado are aggressively trying to fit their services to the needs of the people, they are finding themselves unable to meet all of those needs. Lack of sufficient funding is impacting the agencies' ability to serve and ability to communicate. It is also fostering a heavy inter-agency referral traffic with consequent inefficiencies and has a significant affect upon the peoples' ability to enter into learning programs.

The structure exists in Colorado to meet every learning need. The implementation needs help.

**Adds to more than 100% since more than one choice could be given.*

SECTION 4 COLORADO REGIONS

1) SOUTH PLATTE VALLEY

(Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington and Yuma counties)

2) NORTHERN FRONT RANGE

(Larimer and Weld counties)

3) METROPOLITAN DENVER

(Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Gilpin, and Jefferson counties)

4) PIKES PEAK

(El Paso, Park and Teller counties)

5) HIGH PLAINS

(Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson and Lincoln counties)

6) LOWER ARKANSAS VALLEY

(Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers counties)

7) SPANISH PEAKS

(Huerfano, Pueblo and Las Animas counties)

8) SAN LUIS VALLEY

(Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande and Saguache counties)

9) SAN JUAN BASIN

(Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan counties)

10) BLACK CANYON

(Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel counties)

11) PLATEAU

(Garfield, Mesa, Moffat and Rio Blanco counties)

12) NORTHERN MOUNTAIN

(Eagle, Grand, Jackson, Pitkin, Routt and Summit counties)

13) UPPER ARKANSAS VALLEY

(Chaffee, Custer, Fremont and Lake counties)